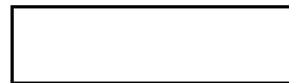


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Jordan: A cabinet reshuffle, possibly linked to last weekend's agreement between King Husayn and the fedayeen, may be in the works.

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25X1 [redacted] A cabinet reshuffle was one of the fedayeen's widely advertised demands during the pre-settlement period last week. A Damascus press agency, not a very reliable source, has since quoted Fatah leader Yasir Arafat as saying that the King "agrees" with the commando organizations regarding Talhuni's replacement by Abd al-Munim al-Rifai, the present foreign minister. According to the same source, Arafat added that the fedayeen have also requested the removal of the King's uncle, Sharif Nasir, as commander of the Jordan Arab Army, but he did not indicate whether the King had agreed to this as well.

Rifai is somewhat more conciliatory than Talhuni on the fedayeen issue. His appointment, should it in fact materialize, could represent another aspect of the compromise hammered out between the King and the fedayeen, but would tend to confirm that neither side had won a clear-cut victory. Sharif Nasir's replacement, on the other hand, would be widely interpreted as a significant concession on the King's part.

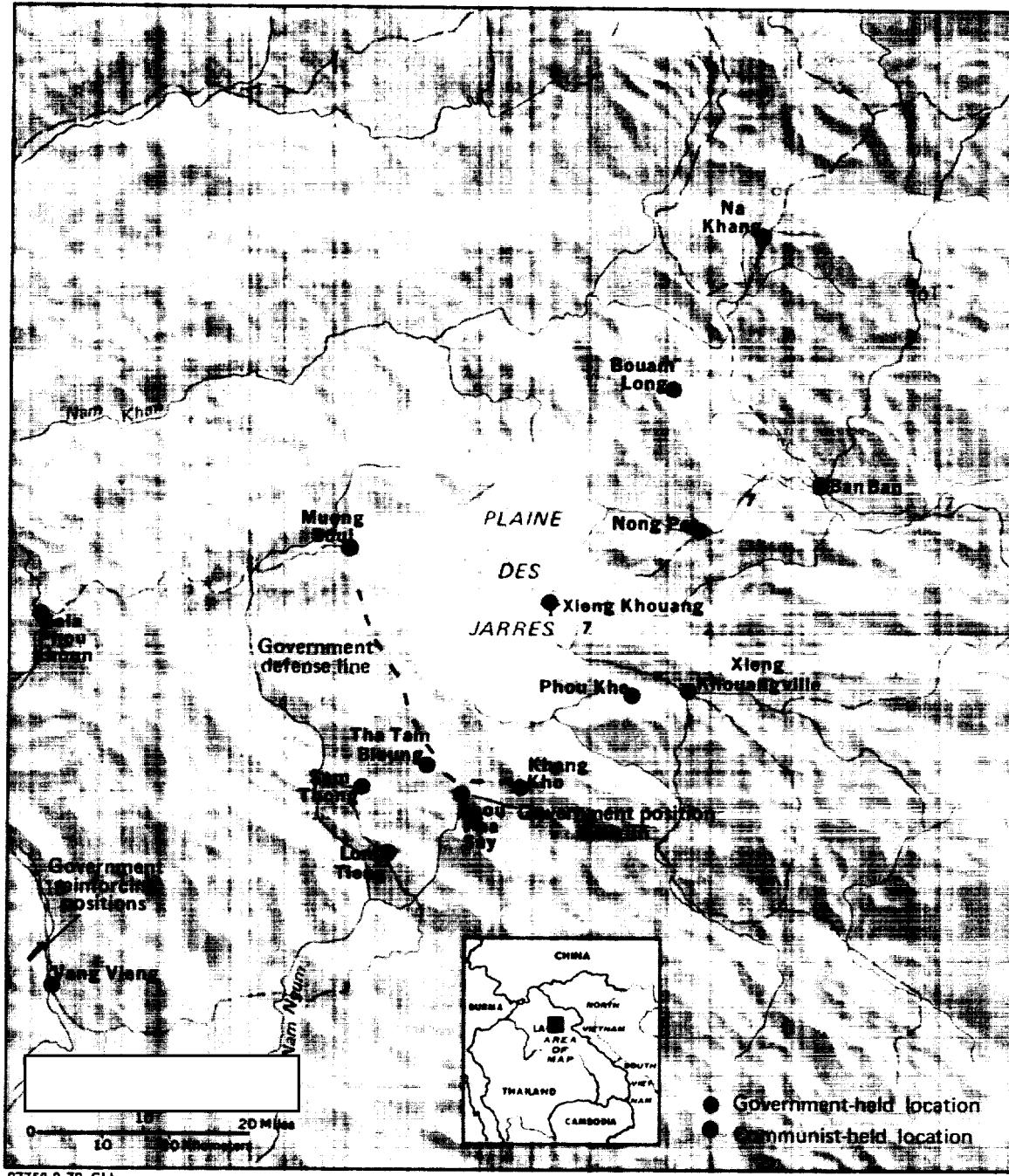
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New Communist Activity South of the Plaine



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Laos: Communist forces are beginning to probe government positions south of the Plaine des Jarres.

In the early morning of 27 February an enemy force overran the lightly defended government position at Phou Pha Say, a mountain outpost only ten miles from Long Tieng. Vang Pao is now moving troops in to retake the mountain top. Only a handful of enemy troops were reported to still be on the summit.

Meanwhile in Vientiane, Prime Minister Souvanna is putting pressure on his generals in south Laos to provide reinforcements for the fighting in the north. Although Souvanna was able to get the grudging support of the generals to supply some troops to bolster defenses north of Vang Vieng, their limited numbers and poor quality indicate they will have little bearing on the government's ability to withstand a Communist threat from this direction.

Souvanna also is making an effort to shift the conflict back into the diplomatic arena. The prime minister has called publicly for a reconvening of the signatories to the 1962 Geneva Accords, although he has to date not yet issued a formal request to the cochairmen.

(Map)

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Italy: Negotiations to form a coalition government are faltering over the issue of relations with the Vatican.

Papal pressure, in the form of a diplomatic note of protest and a public statement against pending Italian divorce legislation, has created friction among the political parties. The Socialists, Unitary Socialists, and Republicans are calling on the caretaker Christian Democratic government to reject the note. Mariano Rumor, who is both caretaker prime minister and prime minister-designate, has made no move to do so.

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A bill permitting divorce passed the lower house last year. The center-left parties had agreed that its passage over Christian Democratic opposition would not be considered a no confidence vote in the government leadership. Prior to the Vatican action, political spokesmen had not considered the question of upper house action on the bill an important hurdle for the current negotiations. Now, however, the divorce issue has become critical. Other difficult problems include attitudes toward granting amnesty for some of those accused of breaking the law during the 1969 strikes, economic policy, and the extension of center-left cooperation to local governments.

President Saragat has the constitutional power to call for early national elections, but it is unlikely that he would exercise it except as a last resort and after repeated failures to find a successor government.

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Guatemala: All political groups are making contingency plans for a crisis after the general elections on Sunday.

Despite the presence of OAS observers and the government's all-out efforts for a model election day, the leftist and rightist opposition groups continue to stress the theme of impending electoral fraud. Both groups contain elements ready to go into the streets to protest election irregularities.

Hopes for order continue to depend largely on rightist presidential candidate Colonel Carlos Arana's evaluation of the honesty of the outcome. He has disclaimed any intention of fomenting disturbances and says that he will deal with fraud through legal channels.

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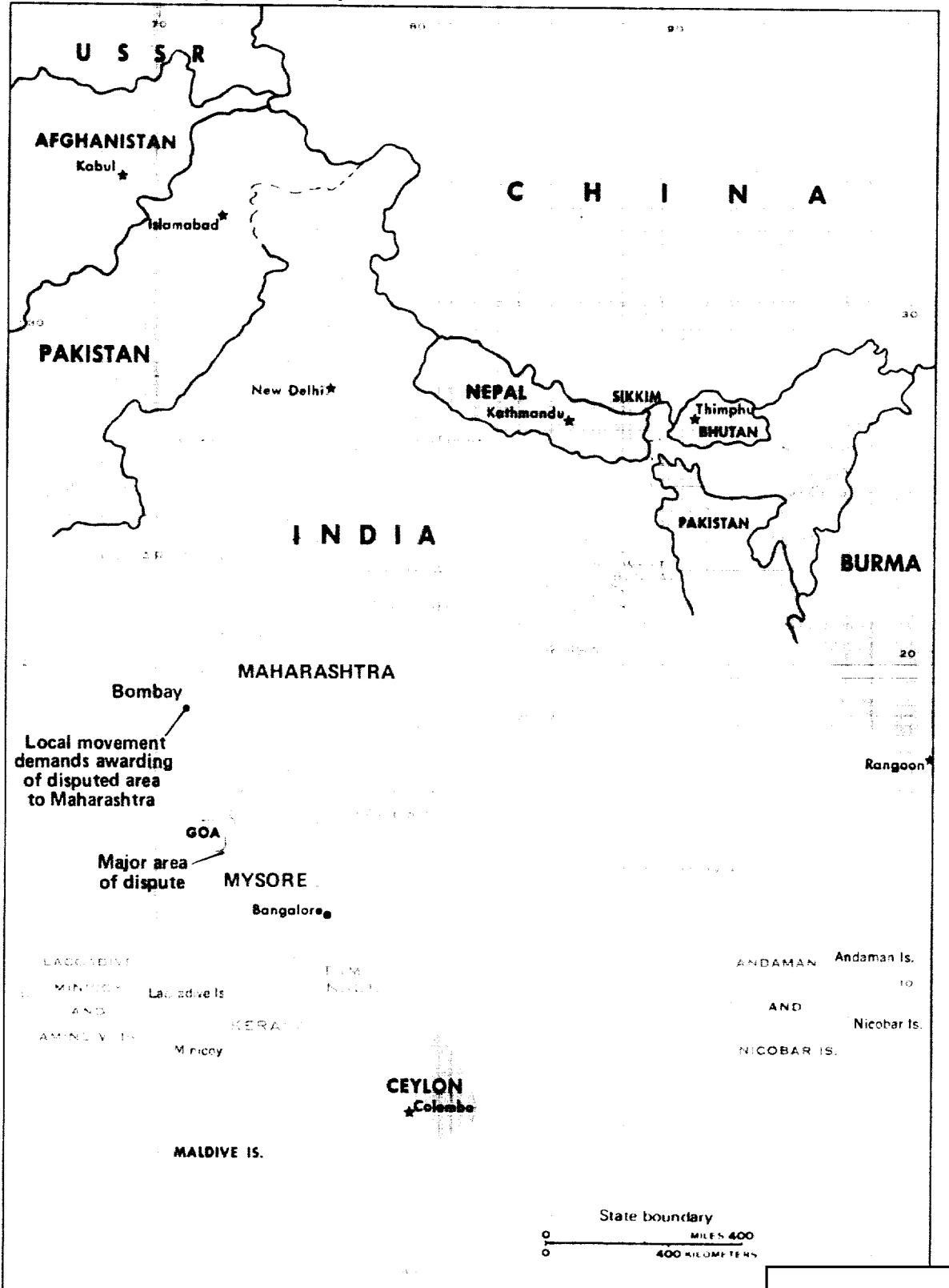
The deaths of three persons--one a government legislative candidate--in a gunfight between rightist and government partisans in downtown Guatemala City on 25 February are indicative of the tension that permeates the electoral scene. A policeman was killed and another policeman and two bystanders were wounded in a terrorist attack in Guatemala City yesterday.

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Violence is likely in Bombay



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NOTE

India: Violence is likely in Bombay, the capital of Maharashtra state, on Monday. The Shiv Sena, a local chauvinistic movement, is calling for a ban on all vehicular traffic to press the central government into awarding Maharashtra a disputed area now incorporated in the neighboring state of Mysore. The police were unable to control serious disorders that erupted during a Shiv Sena - initiated demonstration a year ago. The leaders of the ban have said that their intentions are peaceful, but the Shiv Sena can be expected to rally substantial support for its cause. The police commissioner plans to deploy all his forces within the city to protect non-Maharashtrans--particularly natives of Mysore who now live in the city. [redacted] (Map)

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